तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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THE DUST OF KRISHNA'S FEET

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Why is Vrindavan Dham worshiped? Because Vrindavan Dham is not different from Krishna. When you take a little dust of Vrindavan Dham that means you are taking the dust of Krishna's lotus feet. Vrindavan Dham is so important. (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* Lecture in Vrindavan, 17 September 1975.)

While you were walking you saw a devotee taking the dust of Raman Reti and putting it on his head. This is Vrindavan — the dust. Vrindavan dust is also Krishna. (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* lecture in Vrindavan, 3 April 1976.)

[The *gopīs* speaking amongst themselves about Krishna:] When he plays on His flute and calls the cows with Balaram, the river Yamuna stops flowing and waits for the air to carry dust from His lotus feet. (*Krishna Book*, chapter 35.)

When Akrura reached Vrindavan, the sun was setting. As soon as he entered the boundary of Vrindavan he saw the hoof prints of the cows and Lord Krishna's footprints, impressed with the signs of His soles — the flag, trident, thunderbolt and lotus flower. These symbols on the soles of the Lord's transcendental lotus feet are worshiped by all the demigods and other great personalities throughout the three worlds. Upon seeing the footprints of Krishna, Akrura immediately jumped down from the chariot out of respect. He became overwhelmed with all the symptoms of ecstasy; he wept, and his body trembled. Out of extreme jubilation upon seeing the dust touched by the lotus feet of Krishna, Akrura fell flat on his face and began to roll on the ground.

Akrura's journey to Vrindavan is exemplary. One who intends to visit Vrindavan should follow the ideal footsteps of Akrura and always think of the pastimes and activities of the Lord. As soon as one reaches the boundary of Vrindavan, he should immediately smear the dust of Vrindavan over his body without thinking of his material position and prestige. Srila Narottama Das Thakur has sung in a celebrated song [*Prārthanā* 1.1.3], *viṣaya chāḍiyā kabe śuddha habe mana*: "When my mind will be purified after leaving the contamination of material sense enjoyment, I shall be able to visit Vrindavan." Actually, one cannot go to Vrindavan by purchasing a ticket. The process of going to Vrindavan is shown by Akrura. (*Krishna Book*, chapter 38.)

[The *nāgapatnīs* speaking to Krishna about their husband Kaliya:] "O dear Lord, we are simply astonished to see that he is so fortunate as to have the dust of your lotus feet on his head. This is a fortune sought after by great saintly persons.

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Even the goddess of fortune underwent severe austerities just to have the blessing of the dust of your lotus feet, so how is it that Kaliya is so easily getting this dust on his head? We have heard from authoritative sources that those who are blessed with the dust of your lotus feet do not care even for the highest post within the universe, namely the post of Lord Brahma, or the kingship of the heavenly planets, or the sovereignty of this planet. (*Krishna Book,* chapter 16.)

[The *gopīs* speaking amongst themselves after Krishna left the *rāsa-līlā*:] Dear friends, just imagine how the dust of this place is transcendentally glorious. The dust of the lotus feet of Krishna is worshiped even by Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva and the goddess of fortune, Lakshmi. (*Krishna Book,* chapter 30.)

[Balaram speaking to the leaders of the Kuru dynasty at the time he went to recover Samba:] The dust of Krishna's lotus feet is worshiped by all the great demigods. The Ganges water inundates the whole world, and since it emanates from His lotus feet its banks have turned into great places of pilgrimage. The principal deities of all planets engage in His service and consider themselves most fortunate to take the dust of the lotus feet of Krishna on their helmets. (*Krishna Book,* chapter 68.) ❁

Mahaprabhu's Dancing on Janmastami

Adapted from
Srila Narahari Chakravati Thakur's
Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara 12.3148-3168

One day while sitting in the house of Srivas, Mahaprabhu laughed and told the devotees, "Tomorrow is the birthday of Krishna." Knowing the mind of Prabhu, Srivas and others at once understood that tomorrow Vishwambar would dance in the dress of a cowherd boy. With supreme happiness, Srivas and the other devotees began preparing the necessary items. That day, the house of Srivas was filled with joy as the auspicious *abhiṣeka*, or bathing ceremony of Lord Krishna was performed. After the *abhiṣeka* they spent the entire night absorbed in the pleasures of *saṅkīrtana*.

At the end of the night, Lord Gaurachandra thoughtfully adopted the dress of a cowherd boy. Nityananda Prabhu, who is expert in this dress, also decorated himself as a fresh young cowherd boy. Seeing Lord Gaurahari in that dress, no one could keep their patience. Ramai, Sundarananda, Gauridas and others also decorated themselves as cowherd boys, with no limit to their beauty. They all took earthen pots full of yogurt and butter, tied strings around the necks of the pots, and then tied the pots on both ends of a stick. Placing those sticks on their shoulders, they entered into the compound of Srivas. Absorbed in the mood of the cowherd boys, Srivas and Adwaita scattered curd and turmeric in the compound. Full of joyous dancing, singing, music, and joking, the home of Srivas was transformed into the abode of Nanda Maharaja.

[*Narahari Chakravati has composed the following song about this pastime:*]

(sung in kāmoda rāga)

gorā mora gokulera śaśī
kṛṣṇera janama āji kahe hāsi hāsi

My Lord Gauranga is the moon of Gokul. Laughing again and again, he says that today is the birthday of Krishna.

se āveśe thira haite nāre
dhari gopaveśa nāce ullāsa antare

In an introspective mood, he has adopted the dress of a cowherd boy and is dancing in a way that delights the heart.

nitāi gopera veśa dhari
hāte laiyā laguḍa nācaye bhaṅgi kari

Nitai has also accepted the dress of a cowherd boy. Carrying a stick in his hand he dances in various ways.

gaurīdāsa rāmāi sundara
nāce gopa-veśe kāndhe bhāra manohara

Gauridas Pandit and beautiful Ramai [the younger brother of Srivas Pandit] look enchanting as they dance in the dress of cowherd boys, carrying clay pots on their shoulders.

śrīvāsa advaita gopa-veśe
chaḍāya haladī dadhi manera ullāse

In the dress of cowherd boys, Srivas and Adwaita joyfully throw turmeric and yogurt.

keha keha nānā vādya vāya
mukunda mādhava ye janama-līlā gāya

While different persons played varieties of music, Mukunda Das and Madhava Das sang about the birth pastimes of Krishna.

kare sumaṅgala nārīgaṇa
śrīvāsa ālaya yena nandera bhavana

The ladies made many auspicious sounds, as if Srivas' house was the palace of Nanda Maharaja.

jaya-dhvani kari bāre bāre
dhāya loka dhairaja dharite keu nāre

Again and again the devotees shouted, "All glories! All glories!" No one could keep their patience.

kata sādhe dekhe āṅkhi bhari'
śobhāya bhuvana bhule bhaṇe narahari

Eagerly gazing on these pastimes, so many people felt complete satisfaction of their eyes. Narahari says that the whole world is enchanted by that beauty.

— Translated from the Gaudiya Mission edition. Bagbazar, Calcutta. 1987.

Controlled by Radha's Love

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Krishna is controlled by Radharani's love. Jayadev Goswami has written in the *Gita Govinda*, *dehi pāda pallavam udhāram* — "O Radharani, I ask for your lotus feet. Please give them to me." In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*ādi* 4.82) we find, *govindānandinī rādhā, govinda-sarvasva* — Radharani is giving pleasure to Govinda, and that Govinda is everything for Radharani. Krishna completely belongs to Radharani. He becomes a madman for her. When Radharani takes bath in the Yamuna, Krishna takes bath downstream because all her remnants — scent, flowers, *kuṁkum* — will come floating down that stream and will touch Krishna's body. He is like a madman. Krishna becomes mad for Radharani. At night he goes to the courtyard of Radharani's house. Radharani's mother-in-law and sister-in-law chastise him, "Where is that Krishna? Wicked, naughty fellow!" Being afraid of them he hides there behind a *badarī* tree. He is like a madman.

To get Radharani's association and to touch her body, Krishna sometimes disguises himself as a washerman's wife and goes to her house. "Radharani, please give me your clothes, I will wash them." Sometimes he disguises himself as the wife of a barber, *nāpituṇī*. Traditionally, the wife of a barber puts *alatā*, a red substance, on the feet of the ladies. So Krishna would assume the form of a barber's wife and say, "Please, Radharani! Come, I'll put *alatā* on your feet." Such a madman!

Therefore, Krishna assumed the mood and complexion of Radharani and came as Gauranga Mahaprabhu, and he cried as Radharani is crying for Krishna. Mahaprabhu said: (*Cc. antya* 19.35) *kva nanda-kula-candramāḥ* — "Where is that Krishna, the son of Nanda Maharaja?" *kva mandra-muralī-ravaḥ* — "Where is he who plays very sweetly with his flute?"

Mahaprabhu said, *(Cc. madhya* 2.15*) kāhāṅ karoṅ kāhāṅ pāṅ vrajendra-nandana* — "Where shall I go? Where shall I find Vrajendranandan, the son of Nanda Maharaja?" Mahaprabhu is Krishna, but he has assumed the mood and complexion of Radharani — he thinks he is Radha. So Radharani is greater than Krishna.

Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*ādi* 6.100) says, *kṛṣṇera samatā haite baḍa bhakta-pada* — The position of being a devotee is higher than that of equality with Lord Krishna. The *brahmavādīs* or *māyāvādīs* want to become the Supreme Lord, or become one with him. They are ignorant fools. Why do they want to do that? It is better to become Krishna's *bhakta*, devotee, because a devotee can become greater than Krishna. If you become a very dear intimate devotee of Krishna, Krishna will make you greater than him. So why are they trying to become one with him? Such nonsense! Become his devotee! Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.7) *mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya* — "O Dhananjaya, there is no one superior to me." But in actuality this is not true. Krishna is cheating. His devotee is greater! Such devotees can bind him or climb up on his shoulders. Yasoda-mata bound Krishna and Sridam-gopa climbed up on his shoulder. This is an example of *bhakta-vātsalya*. How dear Krishna's devotee is! Krishna says in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.14.15)

na tathā me priyatama ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ
na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr naivātmā ca yathā bhavān

"O Uddhava, you are so dear to me. That *ātma-yonir*, Lord Brahma, is not so dear. Sankara, Lord Shiva, is not so dear. Lakshmi-devi, the goddess of fortune — she is not so dear. Balaram is not so dear. *Naivātmā* — I myself am not so dear as you are dear to me." So who is greater? The devotee. If you become a devotee then Krishna will make you greater than he is.

We find in the *Brahma Saṁhitā* (5.1):

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam

Krishna is the cause of all causes and full of eternity knowledge and bliss. He is *parameśvara* — the supreme controller. Yet he

is also *bhakta-prema-bādhya* — bound up with the love of his devotee, and *bhakta-paratantra* — under the control of his devotee. The devotee is so great! Therefore, Krishna assumes the mood of a devotee and comes as a devotee. That is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

— From a lecture on *Cc. 1.* 5.105-8, Bhubaneswar, 12 Oct. 1989.

Krishna Wants Milk

Srila Bilvamangala Thakur's Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta 2.59

The following verse from a Kerala version of Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta *is not found in other editions, and is thus considered by some scholars to be interpolated.*

mātaḥ kiṁ yadunātha dehi caṣakaṁ kiṁ tena pātuṁ payas
tan nāsty adya kadāsti vā niśi niśā kā vāndha-kārodayaḥ
āmīlyākṣi-yugaṁ niśābhyupagatā dehīti mātur muhur
vakṣojāṁśuka-karṣaṇodyata-karaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sa puṣṇātu naḥ

"O Mother."
"What is it, son Yadunantha?"
"Give me the cup."
"What for?"
"To drink milk."
"There is no milk right now."
"When will it come?"
"At night."
"What is night?"
"When darkness comes."
"Night has come!" said Krishna closing his eyes and repeatedly tugging on her upper cloth.

May Lord Krishna, who performed such pastimes, protect us!

THOUGHTS: Krishna is acting under the influence of his *yoga-māyā* potency — he forgets his position as the Supreme Lord. By acting like a small child who thinks that he can invoke darkness by closing his eyes, Krishna enhances the *vātsalya-prīti,* the parental loving ecstasy, of Mother Yasoda.

Krishna's closing his eyes also gives a lesson in the meaning of *darśana,* seeing. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur has taught that the common person's conception of the meaning of "*darśana*" as going to a place of worship and seeing the deity is incorrect. There are two principles: *draṣṭā* and *dṛṣṭa,* the seer and the seen. As conditioned souls we do not have the ability to see Krishna. *Padma Purāṇa* describes: *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ* — "One cannot perceive Krishna or his manifestations such as his name, form, qualities, and abode with material senses." Srila Bhaktisiddhanta taught that the real meaning of *darśana* is for Krishna to see us. We should go to the temple not to proudly stand before the deity and try to measure and examine the Lord with our mundane vision. Rather, we should go to humbly present ourselves before the Lord for him to inspect us — to inspect the quality of our service, our *bhajan,* and our devotion. Everything in both the spiritual and material worlds exists for the ultimate purpose of being seen by Krishna for his pleasure. Therefore, if Krishna closes his eyes and no longer casts his merciful glance, a devotee considers that all the worlds have become truly dark.

Krishna tugged on the choli, the garment covering Mother Yasoda's breast. Why is that? By doing so he reminded Yasoda of the intimate and sweet exchanges they shared when Krishna was nursing from her breasts. By pulling on her upper cloth, Krishna indicated to her that it was her responsibility to provide him milk. Also, by reminding her of his pastime of nursing from her breasts, Krishna pulled on not just the upper cloth of Yasoda but on her heartstrings as well. Krishna's desire is not actually for milk; he hankers for the love of Mother Yasoda. He is therefore known as *rasika-śekhara* — the foremost enjoyer of the mellows of love. — MD

— Sanskrit and adapted English translation from *Kṛṣṇakarṇāmṛtam* translated by Dr. K. P. A. Menon. Nag Publishers. Delhi. 1994.

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